Two types of Fake Free Relatives in Turkish
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I claim in this talk that Turkish does not have genuine Free Relatives (FRs). Rather, two distinct types of apparent FRs are actually constructions of a different nature: One type is a “Light-Headed RC”, while the second type is a correlative construction. Each type is discussed briefly below.

FR Type 1: Constructions usually called FRs or headless relative clauses in Turkish exhibit modifying clauses nominalized in the same way as regular headed relative clauses (RCs), thus justifying their analysis as RCs which are DPs; e.g. a subject-targeting FR:

‘I saw (those) who went/were going to the island’

These constructions, while clearly RCs, are unusual typologically in terms of Free Relatives: 1. They don’t exhibit Matching Effects (cf. van Riemsdijk 2000), as illustrated in (1), where the target is in some subject Case (nominative or genitive), while the entire DP is in the accusative; 2. Their semantics: The (apparent) FR refers to definite entities (at least in the primary reading), rather than to quantified or variable ones, as their English (or German) counterparts):

(2) I saw whoever / whomever went to the island

These non-typical properties of Turkish FRs such as (1) motivate their analysis in Kornfilt (2005) (see also Citko 1999) as “Light-Headed RCs”, rather than genuinely non-headed FRs, i.e. RCs with a (silent) pronominal head. In my talk, I shall address additional properties of this construction, and some constraints on those properties.

FR Type 2: Turning to what appears to be a second type of Turkish FRs, we see that those correspond more closely to their English (and German) counterparts:

(3) Kim ada -ya gid-er -se (onlar -1) pencere -m -den who island-DAT go-AOR-Cond. they-ACC window -1.SG -ABL
   gör -ür -üm see -AOR -1.SG
‘I see from my window who(m)ever goes to the island’

This Turkish construction hasn’t been studied extensively so far and is noteworthy in exhibiting clause-internal wh-“targets” (while otherwise not having relative
pronouns; *wh*-elements are otherwise question elements) and conditional morphology on their predicate.

This study proposes to analyze such “unusual” FRs as a special case of a correlative construction, itself little-studied in Turkish:

(4) Ada -ya hangi öğrenci -ler git -er -se
island-DAT which student -PL go -AOR -Cond
(onlar -i) pencere -m -den gör -ür -üm
they-ACC window -1.SG -ABL see -AOR -1.SG
‘I see from my window whichever students go to the island’ (=’Whichever students go to the island, I see (them)’)

The “variable”, quantificational semantics of these “false conditional” FRs and correlatives is accounted for by the wh-“targets”; the conditional morphology is analyzed as akin to English “comparative conditionals” (cf. McCawley 1998, Culicover & Jackendoff 1999).

**Selected references:**


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